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THE WAR WITH SPAIN.—II.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL NELSON A. MILES, COMMANDING THE
UNITED STATES ARMY.

THE landing of the troops and supplies at Daiquiri and Siboney, including over 2,000 animals, was successfully accomplished; and was followed by the cautious and judicious advance of the leading division under General Lawton, without loss. The dash forward at Las Guasimas caused some disappointment, owing to the serious loss suffered, particularly that of the gallant young men who fell in that first encounter; yet the fortitude and courage displayed by our troops on that occasion was most commendable.

The sharp, fierce fighting at El Caney and San Juan was very gratifying to those who appreciate courage, fortitude and heroic sacrifice. Both of those positions were held by comparatively small forces of Spaniards, and were regarded as the outer-works of the intrenchments around Santiago. But troops occupying intrenched positions and stone buildings, armed with smokeless powder rifles and machine guns, cannot be dislodged, except by directing against them a most destructive artillery fire or an overwhelming force of troops, or by flank maneuvers. Our troops, under the skillful and conspicuous leadership of the subordinate commanders directly in charge of them on the fighting line, displayed in a marked degree dauntless intrepidity, fortitude and gallantry. Lawton exhibited most excellent generalship and the same tenacity and activity which he had displayed on other fields. Chaffee was conspicuous for his courage, for which he was already noted. Bates, one of the veterans of the Civil War, moved his division to the support of Lawton, and again returned in time to take part in the closing scenes about San Juan Hill. Wheeler, who had taken part in the affair at Las Guasimas and had become

ill from over-exertion, which compelled his absence during the principal fighting at San Juan Hill, yet, on hearing of the engagement, with more martial spirit than physical strength, joined his command later in the day. During his temporary absence, the Cavalry Division was under the command of Colonel (afterwards General) Sumner, whose commands were given in the most cool and deliberate way, under the most trying circumstances, as the troops swept up the ascent at San Juan Hill. The bravery of Roosevelt was conspicuous as he led his command into action, while the troops under Generals Hawkins and Kent were skillfully manœuvered by their brave commanders.

The army lost in these engagements some of its best officers and bravest men. The total number present for duty June 30 was 858 officers and 17,358 enlisted men. From July 1 to 12, there were 22 officers and 222 enlisted men killed, and 93 officers and 1,288 enlisted men wounded.

The troops, with the assistance of the Cubans, continued to besiege the garrison, extending their line to the right until it reached the bay of Santiago, covering the Cobre road.

While the news of the results of the engagements was gratifying, the situation of the troops caused much anxiety, and the severe loss that had occurred rendered the situation serious. In fact, it is impossible to describe the condition of anxiety that existed in Washington at that time, and especially on the receipt of the following telegram:

"Playa del Este, July 3, 1898.

(Received Washington, 11.44 a. m.)

"The Secretary of War, Washington:

"We have the town well invested on the north and east, but with a very thin line. Upon approaching it we find it of such a character and the defenses so strong, it will be impossible to carry it by storm with my present force, and I am seriously considering withdrawing about five miles and taking up a new position on the high ground between the San Juan River and Siboney, with our left at Sardinero, so as to get our supplies, to a large extent, by means of the railroad, which we can use, having engines and cars at Siboney. Our losses up to date will aggregate a thousand, but list has not yet been made; but little sickness outside of exhaustion from intense heat and exertion of the battle of the day before yesterday and the almost constant fire which is kept up on the trenches. Wagon road to the rear is kept up with some difficulty on account of rains, but I will be able to use it for the present. General Wheeler is seriously ill, and will probably have to go to the rear to-day. General Young also very ill, confined to his bed. General Hawkins slightly wounded in foot. During sortie enemy made last night, which was handsomely repulsed, the behavior of the regular

troops was magnificent. I am urging Admiral Sampson to attempt to force the entrance of the harbor, and will have a consultation with him this morning. He is coming to the front to see me. I have been unable to be out during the heat of the day for four days, but am retaining the command. General Garcia reported he holds the railroad from Santiago to San Luis, and has burned a bridge and removed some rails; also that General Pando has arrived at Palma, and that the French Consul, with about four hundred French citizens, came into his lines yesterday from Santiago. Have directed him to treat them with every courtesy possible.

SHAFTER, Major-General."

The following reply was sent, not only for the purpose of expressing appreciation of the heroic conduct of the troops, but to give all possible encouragement, with the assurance of speedy reinforcement:

"Headquarters of the Army,
Washington, D. C., July 3, 1898.

"General Shafter, Playa del Este, Cuba:

"Accept my hearty congratulations on the record made of magnificent fortitude, gallantry, and sacrifice displayed in the desperate fighting of the troops before Santiago. I realize the hardships, difficulties, and sufferings, and am proud that amid those terrible scenes the troops illustrated such fearless and patriotic devotion to the welfare of our common country and flag. Whatever the results to follow their unsurpassed deeds of valor, the past is already a gratifying chapter of history. I expect to be with you within one week with strong reinforcements.

MILES,
Major-General, Commanding."

The following reply was received:

"Headquarters Fifth Army Corps,
Near Santiago, Playa, July 4, 1898.

"Major-General Nelson A. Miles,

Commanding the Army of the United States, Washington:

"I thank you in the name of the gallant men I have the honor to command for the splendid tribute of praise which you have accorded them. They bore themselves as American soldiers always have. Your telegram will be published at the head of the regiments in the morning. I feel that I am master of the situation and can hold the enemy for any length of time. I am delighted to know that you are coming that you may see for yourself the obstacles which this army had to overcome. My only regret is the great number of gallant souls who have given their lives for our country's cause.

SHAFTER."

On July 3rd Cervera's fleet sailed out of the harbor of Santiago. It was not a challenge to battle, for Cervera knew the odds against him were overwhelming. On the contrary, it was a dash for life. For his plunge the Spaniard chose a most favorable moment, as he could have seen the flagship of the mighty fleet which

envyioned him (and its fleetest) steam majestically toward the east, as Admiral Sampson had gone to meet General Shafter, as indicated in the above telegram, leaving Admiral Schley temporarily in command. The disposition of the vessels of our fleet had been well planned, and within three hours and forty minutes from the time of the appearance of the first vessel the whole Spanish fleet, consisting of four cruisers and two torpedo-boat destroyers, had either been sunk or were burning on the beach. Admiral Cervera and 76 other officers and 1,600 men were taken prisoners; 350 men were killed or drowned, and 160 wounded.

This gratifying victory settled what had been up to that moment the problem of the Spanish war in the West Indies, namely, the question as to the command of the sea. The inclosing of Cervera's fleet in Santiago Harbor was the only occasion for sending troops to that place at that season of the year. The general plan of campaign then was to first capture or destroy the fleet and then to capture the Island of Porto Rico.

The destruction of the Spanish fleet presented a new problem, especially in view of the fact that serious losses had been suffered by the army and of the possibility that further sacrifice might be required to reduce the garrison at Santiago, it being known that the army was liable to be decimated by disease at that season.

The situation at that time is indicated by the following telegrams:

"Playa del Este, via Haiti,
July 4, 1898, 11.50 p. m.

"Adjutant-General, U. S. A., Washington:

"Headquarters Fifth Army Corps, in camp near Santiago de Cuba, 4. There appears to be no reasonable doubt that General Pando succeeded in entering Santiago last night with his force, said to be about 5,000 men. This puts a different aspect upon affairs, and while we can probably maintain ourselves, it would be at the cost of very considerable fighting and loss. General Lawton reports that General Garcia, who was to block entrance of Pando, informed him at 10 o'clock last night that Pando had passed in on Cobre road. Lawton says cannot compel General Garcia to obey my instructions, and that if they intend to place themselves in any position where they will have to fight, and if they intend to reduce Santiago, we will have to depend alone upon our own troops, and that we will require twice the number we now have. I sent a message to Admiral Sampson, asking if he proposed entering the harbor so as to give us his assistance. Commodore Watson replies that he does not know Admiral Sampson's intention since the destruction of the Spanish squadron, but does not himself think fleet should try to go into harbor of Santiago. This, under the circumstances, is not very encouraging. Have been expecting a division from Tampa and Duf-

field's second brigade from Camp Alger, but only a small number of recruits has appeared so far. If we have got to try and reduce the town, now that the fleet is destroyed, which was stated to be the chief object of the expedition, there must be no delay in getting large bodies of troops here. The town is in a terrible condition as to food, and people are starving, as stated by foreign consuls this morning, but the troops can fight and have large quantities of rice, but no other supplies. There will be nothing done here until noon of the 5th, and I suppose I can put them off a little longer to enable people to get out. Country here is destitute of food and growing crops, except mangoes. Men are in good spirits and so far in good health, though it is hard to tell how long the latter will continue. I am sorry to say I am no better and, in addition to my weakness, cannot be out on account of slight attack of gout, but hope to be better soon. Lieutenant Miley had interview with Consuls this morning, and his report will be telegraphed immediately. I do not send this in cipher, as time is precious.

SHAFTER, Major-General."

"Playa del Este, via Haiti,

July 5, 1898, 1.10 a. m.

"Adjutant-General, Washington:

"Headquarters Fifth Army Corps, camp near San Juan River, 4. If Sampson will force an entrance with all his fleet to the upper bay of Santiago, we can take the city within a few hours. Under these conditions I believe the town will surrender. If the army is to take the place, I want 15,000 troops speedily, and it is not certain that they can be landed, as it is getting stormy. Sure and speedy way is through the bay. Am now in position to do my part.

SHAFTER, Major-General."

Three propositions were made from the War Department to the Chief Executive. The discussion of these propositions resulted in my writing two notes, which will be understood by what follows. The first was the following:

"Headquarters of the Army.

Washington, July 5, 1898.

"The Honorable, The Secretary of War:

"Sir: As the object for which the Army was sent to Santiago de Cuba has been accomplished, viz.: the forcing of the Spanish fleet out of the harbor and its destruction by the Navy, I deem the present time most favorable for proceeding immediately to Porto Rico. I consider it of the highest importance that we should take and keep that Island, which is the gateway to the Spanish possessions on the Western Hemisphere, and it is also important that our troops should be landed there as early as possible during this month. There are now about 4,000 men on transports at Key West, approximately 7,000 will soon be at Charleston, South Carolina, and there are already 20,000 at Santiago. If this force is not sufficient, the transports can return for more, if required.

Very respectfully,

NELSON A. MILES,

Major-General, Commanding."

In the second note it was stated that an officer had volunteered "to take one of the transports now at Santiago, protecting it with material there, and with which several of the transports are partly loaded, and force it into the harbor of Santiago for the purpose of dropping dynamite cartridges and dragging for submerged mines or torpedoes. Any number of volunteers will be found ready for this service if required."

On learning that no one of the four propositions was definitely determined upon, and lest my views might be misunderstood, I sent, on the afternoon of the same day, the following letter:

"Headquarters of the Army,
Washington, July 5, 1898.

"The Honorable, The Secretary of War:

"Sir: I do not wish to be misunderstood in regard to my two notes sent you this morning. You informed me that you had three propositions to make in regard to Santiago. I replied that I would be glad if any one of them could be executed; and certainly no one could be more gratified than myself to hear that our Navy had entered the harbor of Santiago to silence the batteries that are now turned upon our brave officers and men. It so happened that on returning to my office one of my staff officers volunteered his services, without the least knowledge of what you had said to me, for the very enterprise which was suggested in one of your propositions, and I sent notice of this to you for your personal information.

"I also informed you that in case it should not be thought advisable to adopt the suggestions as indicated in your memorandum, I had another to suggest, having in mind at the time the language of General Shafter's dispatch of last night, referring to the number of troops required, viz.: "We will require twice the number we now have"; also, "If we have got to try and reduce the town now that the fleet is destroyed, which was stated to be the chief object of the expedition, there must be no delay in getting large bodies of troops here;" and also realizing the fact that much time would be necessary to get 20,000 more troops to that place, it occurred to me that should it *not* be thought advisable to continue operations against the garrison at Santiago, it would be a good time to move on to Porto Rico, the capture of which place seemed to me of great importance at this time.

"These notes were addressed to you with the expectation that if they were of any service and met your approval, you would make such use of them as you thought advisable, but not otherwise, and I request that this communication be forwarded to the President in order to dispossess his mind of what must be a misapprehension.

Very respectfully,

NELSON A. MILES,
Major-General, Commanding."

At a council of war held at the White House on the next day, the subject was seriously considered, and it was then decided that

the garrison at Santiago must be destroyed or captured; and it was also decided that I should proceed immediately to Santiago and take such measures as would accomplish that object.

It was my purpose to land the troops that were then *en route* to Santiago on the west side of the harbor, within two and a half miles of Morro Castle, and I left with the assurance that I would have all necessary assistance from Admiral Sampson's fleet.

I left Washington on the 7th of July and reached Columbia, South Carolina, on the 8th, and thence proceeded by special train to Charleston, at which place I arrived on the evening of the same day and immediately boarded the swift steamer "Yale," the Atlantic liner, better known as the "Paris," which was already loaded with troops, ready to heave anchor, off the harbor and city of Charleston. She was accompanied and convoyed by the U. S. S. "Columbia," also carrying troops. At midnight these two fleet steamers headed for the south with all possible speed and arrived off the harbor of Santiago on the morning of July 11th, while the fleet there gathered was still bombarding the works near Santiago harbor. I immediately communicated with Admiral Sampson, apprising him of my purpose, and he promptly came on board the "Yale." I at once acquainted him with my plan of operation, in which he cordially acquiesced and signified his readiness to support me heartily in carrying it out. As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made for that purpose, I landed on July 12th, and proceeded to General Shafter's headquarters. A note was then sent to the General commanding the Spanish forces, informing him of my arrival and that I desired to have an immediate conference with him between the lines, to which he readily assented, fixing the time at twelve o'clock on the ensuing day.

Already, before leaving Washington, I had been made aware of the appearance of yellow fever among our troops in Cuba and the serious situation which that fact presented. On arriving there I found that the contagion had increased rapidly, and the importance of immediate and decisive action was abundantly apparent.

The meeting with General Toral between the lines on the 13th, under a flag of truce, was no less interesting than important. Several communications had passed between him and General Shafter in regard to the surrender of the garrison, and General Shafter had wired the Secretary of War to the effect that the entrance of our fleet into the harbor was necessary before he could expect a

surrender. In the conversation with General Toral reference was made to his correspondence with General Shafter, the latter urging him to surrender his forces, and he (Toral) claiming that under the Spanish law he could not surrender so long as he had ammunition and food, of both of which it is well known he had a supply. Indeed, the very last ship to enter the harbor of Santiago before it was blockaded by our fleet brought a herd of cattle, which very materially increased the supplies already on hand. At the close of our conversation, I informed the Spanish Commander that when I left Washington, six days before, the decision of the Government had already been reached, that this portion of the Spanish army must either be destroyed or captured, and that the necessary force would be provided and used for that purpose; that I had brought strong reinforcements; and that if they were not sufficient more would follow in order to make sure of accomplishing the object stated. I also reminded him that he had already abundantly vindicated the honor of the Spanish arms in the defense which he had made. I pointed out that further resistance would be of no avail and would only result in unnecessary waste of life. Finally, I informed him that I would give him until the next morning at daylight to decide, and that it would be useless to expect any further delay. He earnestly represented that he could not in so short a time communicate with his Government; and recognizing the possibility of the truth of that statement, I extended the time until twelve o'clock, noon. The conference was then discontinued.

On my way back to camp I received the following telegram from the Secretary of War:

"Washington, D. C., July 13, 1898.

"Major-General Miles:

"You may accept surrender by granting parole to officers and men, the officers retaining their side arms. The officers and men after parole to return to Spain, the United States assisting. If not accepted, then assault, unless in your judgment an assault would fail. Consult with Sampson and pursue such course as to the assault as you jointly agree upon. Matter should be settled promptly.

R. A. ALGER, Secretary of War."

Thus, as will be seen, the matter was left entirely within my discretion. Immediately thereafter I communicated with Admiral Sampson, requesting him to have his preparations completed to cover the landing of troops at the point designated, Cabanas

Bay, on the west side of the entrance of Santiago harbor, at twelve o'clock on the following day. I also gave direction to the Generals commanding the troops on board the transports to complete their preparations for landing their troops at that time and place.

Early the following morning, accordingly, the ships of the fleet were in motion, converging to their designated positions, followed by the transports. This movement was observable from the Spanish lookouts, and information of the manœuvre was speedily communicated to General Toral, some officers having reported to him that they could see fifty-seven vessels, some of which were loaded with troops. Before twelve o'clock arrived, the Spanish Commander sent the following letter:

"Santiago de Cuba, July 14, 1898.

"Honored Sir: His excellency, the general in chief of the army of the Island of Cuba, telegraphs from Havana yesterday at 7 p. m. the following: 'Believing that business of such importance as the capitulation of that place should be known and decided upon by the Government of His Majesty, I give you notice that I have sent the conditions of your telegram, asking an immediate answer and enabling you also to show this to the General of the American army to see if he will agree to await the answer of the Government, which cannot be as soon as the time which he has decided, as communication by way of Bermuda is more slow than by Key West. In the meanwhile your honor and the General of the American army may agree upon capitulation on the basis of repatriation (returning to Spain).' I have the honor to transmit this to you, in case you may (consider) the foregoing satisfactory, that we may designate persons in representation of himself, who, with those in my name, agree to clauses of the capitulation upon the basis of the return to Spain, accepted already in the beginning by the general in chief of this army.

"Awaiting a reply, I am, very respectfully, your servant,

JOSE TORAL, etc."

"General in Chief of the American Forces."

This was, as will be seen, in effect an acquiescence in the demands made upon him the previous day, and on meeting him under a flag of truce at the appointed hour, twelve o'clock, he said that such was his purpose, but under the Spanish rules it would be necessary for everything to be known and approved at Madrid, and that there was not the least doubt that his Government would confirm his action. His manner and frankness left no doubt of his sincerity, and I informed him that I would accept his assurance without reservation, which, as subsequent events proved, was made in good faith, greatly to the gratification of the troops who had taken part in the heroic struggle.

The surrender included not only the garrison of Santiago, consisting of some 11,000 men, but the entire command of General Toral stationed at different points in the eastern part of Cuba, numbering in all 24,000 men.

The Cubans are entitled to at least a good share of the credit for these results, as they, and the United States marines landed near Guantanamo, were the only troops who had been contending against the troops not actually in the garrison at Santiago. Their action during the siege is indicated by the following letter:

"Near Santiago, Cuba, July 15, 1898.

"Dear General Garcia: I beg to congratulate you, as well as ourselves, on what seems now to have been a fortunate solution of the Santiago problem, resulting in the success of our combined forces in the taking of the city, the departure of the Spanish and the restoration of peace in Santiago.

"Permit me to say to you that your forces have performed most notable service and their work has been invaluable to us; not only in scouting and procuring information, but in the vital matter of the construction of trenches and defences for the investment of the city. Your people have accomplished an immense amount of this work with almost no appliances whatever and have cheerfully surrendered the use of them to our troops when the continuation of the investment rendered it necessary to move our regiments forward to the right.

"I make this statement, General, personally and not officially, because I am but a subordinate commander, but do so for the reason that I have been more closely in touch with your forces and have had better occasion to observe their work and the value of their co-operation than perhaps any other.

"I desire to thank you also for the service of General Sanchez and his troops, which were placed at my disposition, and I desire to commend General Sanchez to your favorable consideration. He has promptly and willingly complied with every demand I made on him, and has performed valuable service in extending our right flank to reach the cemetery and cover the Cobre road.

"I shall take another occasion to thank you for the innumerable personal courtesies that you and the officers of your command have shown me, and which, I hope to have an opportunity to repay in some wise hereafter.

"I beg to remain your obedient servant,

WILLIAM LUDLOW,

Brigadier-General, U. S. V."

Indeed, their part in obtaining the results should not be thus lightly dismissed. In my official report I have tried in some measure to do them justice. Since that report was submitted, I have seen the translation of a work published in Spain by the second in command of the naval forces of the Province of Santiago de Cuba, who was present within the beleaguered lines throughout

the Santiago campaign, in which I find admissions greatly to the credit of our Cuban allies. But without these admissions from the enemy, the fact that these insurgents had for three years been steadily gaining ground against troops who had met ours at El Caney with such heroism, is sufficient vindication of their courage and fighting capacity.

I sent the following dispatch, and, later, issued the order which follows:

"Headquarters Cavalry Division, United States Army,
Before Santiago, Cuba, July 14, 1898—12.55 p. m.

"The Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.:

"General Toral formally surrendered the troops of his army corps and division of Santiago on the terms and understanding that his troops would be returned to Spain. General Shafter will appoint commissioners to draw up the conditions of arrangement for carrying out the terms of surrender. This is very gratifying, and General Shafter and the officers and men of this command are entitled to great credit for their tenacity, fortitude, and in overcoming almost insuperable obstacles which they have encountered. A portion of the army has been infected with yellow fever, and efforts will be made to separate those who are infected and those free from it, and to keep those who are still on board ship separated from those on shore. Arrangements will be immediately made for carrying out the further instructions of the President and yourself.

MILES,

Major-General, Commanding the Army."

"Headquarters of the Army,
Siboney, Cuba, July 16, 1898.

"General Field Orders, No. 1

"The gratifying success of the American arms at Santiago de Cuba and some features of a professional character both important and instructive are hereby announced to the Army.

"The declaration of war found our country with a small army scattered over a vast territory. The troops composing this army were speedily mobilized at Tampa, Fla. Before it was possible to properly equip a volunteer force, strong appeals for aid came from the Navy, which had inclosed in the harbor of Santiago de Cuba an important part of the Spanish fleet. At that time the only efficient fighting force available was the United States Army, and in order to organize a command of sufficient strength the cavalry had to be sent dismounted to Santiago de Cuba with the infantry and artillery.

"The expedition thus formed was placed under command of Major-General Shafter. Notwithstanding the limited time to equip and organize an expedition of this character, there was never displayed a nobler spirit of patriotism and fortitude on the part of officers and men going forth to maintain the honor of their country. After encountering the vicissitudes of an ocean voyage, they were obliged to disembark on a foreign shore and immediately engage in an aggressive campaign. Under drenching storms, intense and prostrating heat, within a fever-afflicted district, with little comfort or rest, either by day or night, they

pursued their purpose of finding and conquering the enemy. Many of them, trained in the severe experience of the great war, and in frequent campaigns on the western plains, officers and men alike exhibited a great skill, fortitude, and tenacity, with results which have added a new chapter of glory to their country's history. Even when their own generals in several cases were temporarily disabled, the troops fought on with the same heroic spirit until success was finally achieved. In many instances the officers placed themselves in front of their commands, and under their direct and skillful leadership the trained troops of a brave army were driven from the thickets and jungles of an almost inaccessible country. In the open field the troops stormed entrenched infantry, and carried and captured fortified works with an unsurpassed daring and disregard of death. By gaining commanding ground they made the harbor of Santiago untenable for the Spanish fleet, and practically drove it out to a speedy destruction by the American Navy.

"While enduring the hardships and privations of such a campaign, the troops generously shared their scanty food with the 5,000 Cuban patriots in arms and the suffering people who had fled from the besieged city. With the twenty-four regiments and four batteries, the flower of the United States Army, were also three volunteer regiments. These, though unskilled in warfare, yet, inspired with the same spirit, contributed to the victory, suffered hardships, and made sacrifices with the rest. Where all did so well it is impossible, by special mention, to do justice to those who bore conspicuous part. But of certain unusual features mention cannot be omitted, namely, the cavalry dismounted fighting and storming works as infantry, and a regiment of colored troops, who having shared equally in the heroism as well as the sacrifices, is now voluntarily engaged in nursing yellow-fever patients and burying the dead. The gallantry, patriotism, and sacrifices of the American Army, as illustrated in this brief campaign, will be fully appreciated by a grateful country, and the heroic deeds of those who have fought and fallen in the cause of freedom will ever be cherished in sacred memory and be an inspiration to the living.

"By command of Major-General Miles:

J. C. GILMORE,

Brigadier-General, United States Volunteers."

The surrender having been definitely agreed upon, my first thought then was to put the troops into as healthful camps as possible and remove them from the danger of further infection from yellow fever; and also to as speedily as possible organize the expedition for the capture of Porto Rico, which I had been desirous of accomplishing for several weeks.

NELSON A. MILES.

(To be Continued.)